

BOOK REVIEW

GLENN KEATOR. 2009. **California Plant Families: West of the Sierran Crest and Deserts.** (ISBN: 978-0-520-23709-4, hbk.). University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, California 94704-1012, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.ucpress.edu or California-Princeton Fulfillment Services, 1445 Lower Ferry Road, Ewing, New Jersey 08618, U.S.A., orders@cpfsinc.com, 1-800-777-4726). \$27.50, 224 pp., b/w line drawings, 7" × 10".

California Plant Families by Glenn Keator gives a comprehensive overview of common and important plant families seen in the greater part of California west of the Sierran Crest and Deserts. The text is laid out in an easy to use format. The beginning of the book contains a section describing the background of the book, what regions it covers, and an explanation of how to use the text. There is also a key to families followed by descriptions of the families.

For each family covered, there is a heading or discussion for: Recognition at a Glance, Vegetative Features, Flowers, Flower Parts, Fruits, Related or Similar-Looking Families, and Statistics. Following these features is a list of common California genera and species with both scientific and common name, plant description, and an illustration for many of the species listed.

In the back is an index as well as a glossary with definitions of terms and small illustrations of taxonomic terms that will be useful to amateurs and even trained botanists!

California Plant Families is light weight and would be a great field companion for an amateur. The key to families is easy to use, especially aided with the illustrated glossary of terms.

It is my personal preference that there should be page numbers along side family names in the key. Page numbers following the family names in the key would be beneficial considering the family name is not in the running head at the top of every page; therefore finding the family in the text quickly is a bit tricky.

It is a bit difficult to figure out what vegetation area the book is focusing on. The text insinuates that it's mostly the state west of the Sierran Crest, however, it's not very clear. It seems if so much of the state is covered, the work would have benefited by including all California plant families or one ecological section of the state, whether it be deserts or the Sierras.—*Rebecca Swadek, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 500 E 4th Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-4025, U.S.A.*